



Board of Commissioners of the North Broward Hospital District

Robert's Rules of Order: Tips

March 29, 2023

Linda Epstein, General Counsel

Robert's Rules of Order

- Article III, section 2 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the North Broward Hospital District provides: “All Board and Board committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with ‘*Robert’s Rule of Order*,’ as modified by the Board from time to time, unless otherwise in conflict with Florida Law or specific provisions of these Bylaws.”
- Robert’s Rules of Order is a tool of parliamentary procedure used for deliberative assemblies to facilitate discussions and make decisions.
- Robert’s Rules establishes a method and procedure to take up business one item at a time, ensure the orderly flow of business, and to protect the perspectives of the members in the minority.

Basic Element of Robert's Rules: Motions

- A motion is the method of introducing a new piece of business or propose a decision or action.
- Today we're going to discuss two different types of motions:
 1. **Main Motion:** Introduce a new item
 2. **Subsidiary Motion:** Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)

Basic Element of Robert's Rules: Motions

Motion:

To introduce a topic or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a commissioner (“I move that...”).

The motion must receive a “**second**” (“I second that...”). A “**second**” is made in order to have discussion on the motion. If there is no “**second**” the motion dies. A second merely implies that the seconder has agreed that the motion should come before the board and not necessarily that he/she favors the motion.

The motion is stated (or restated) by the chair prior to discussion (“A motion to approve a two-year contract with XYZ has been made by Commissioner __ and seconded by Commissioner __. Is there any discussion on the motion?”)

Discussion should be orderly.

Following discussion, a vote is taken. A majority vote is required for a motion to pass (unless otherwise specified).

Motions Continued

- Once a main motion is seconded and restated, it is now “on the floor.”
- In other words, it is now the assembly’s motion and no longer the motion of the motion-maker.
- This means that the Board has to either vote for or against the motion and changes to the motion cannot be made unless there is a formal motion to amend.
- If a motion to amend is made (and seconded), the motion to amend is on the floor for debate and the debate on the main motion is postponed until the Board considers the motion to amend.

Amendments

When/How to Make an Amendment

An amendment is a subsidiary motion because it changes or affects how to handle a main motion.

When: During discussion of a main motion

How: There are three (3) types of Amendments:

1. Insert or Add Words (Paragraphs)
2. Strike Out Words (Paragraphs)
3. Strike Out and Insert Words (Substitute Paragraph)

When the amendment is on the floor (it has been seconded), the amendment (subsidiary motion) is voted on before the main motion.



Amendments

- The amendment proposed must in some way involve the same question raised by the motion it amends. It must be **germane**.
- The amendment must be **seconded**. If no **second**, the amendment dies.
- If the amendment receives a **second**, the amendment *only* is up for **discussion**.
- Once discussion ends, a vote is taken on the **amendment**.
- If the **amendment passes**, the chair states, “The amendment is adopted and the question is now on the main motion, as amended” (the chair would read the motion as amended) and ask if there is any further debate/discussion? A vote is taken on the motion as amended.
- If the **amendment fails**, the amendment is lost and the question is now back to the main motion as originally stated.

Example: Amendment to Main Motion

Main Motion

Chair: “**A motion to paint the hospital garnet and gold** has been moved by Commissioner and seconded by Commissioner _____. Is there any discussion on the motion”?

During discussion....

Amendment

Commissioner ____: “I move to amend the motion by adding the words “***by the end of April 2023***” after the word, “***gold***”

Commissioner ____: Second.

Chair: “It was moved and seconded to insert the words, ‘**by the end of April 2023**’ after the word, ‘**gold**’. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, **To paint the hospital garnet and gold by the end of April 2023**”. Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Those in favor of adding the words “**by the end of April 2023**, say aye... those opposed say no (or you can call a roll-call vote).

Example: Amendment to Main Motion

- If the amendment passes, the question turns to the main motion, as amended.
- Chair: **The motion is to paint the hospital garnet and gold by the end of April 2023.** Is there any further discussion? Vote.
- If the amendment fails, the question turns to the main motion, as originally stated, **The motion is to paint the hospital garnet and gold.**

The End